

Kosmas Urges Central Florida's Coastal Residents and Businesses to Prepare for Possible Effects of Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

May 19, 2010

(Washington, DC) – Today, after a Florida Congressional Delegation meeting on the status of the Deepwater Horizon Gulf of Mexico oil spill with Rear Admiral Paul F. Zukunft, Director of Response Policy for the U.S. Coast Guard, Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24) issued the following statement:

“Though the oil spill has not reached Florida, the Coast Guard has made it clear that the flow of oil has intersected the Loop Current and tar balls and other remnants could reach the Straits of Florida in about a week. From there, the possibility exists that communities on the East Coast could be hit.

“We know that Florida's tourism and recreational and commercial fishing industries have the potential to be negatively affected by the mere suggestion of the impending approach of oil to our shores. We want to ensure that every measure is being taken to protect and support coastal residents, businesses and communities. Those on the coast should take pictures and video to fully document property ahead of any potential damage and make sure appropriate business documentation is in order to show loss of income.”

“At the same time, we must make sure that those who caused the spill are responsible for any economic damages suffered by our tourism, fishing, and other coastal industries. I call on my colleagues to quickly pass our bill to raise the liability cap on what oil companies would owe for economic damages from spills to \$10 billion in order to protect taxpayers and local businesses.”

Additional information and resources:

If any of Central Florida's East Coast counties are declared disaster areas, residents and businesses may be eligible to claim damages. To prepare:

- Make sure you are able to document any loss or damage you may sustain. Now is the time to get photos of boats, docks, waterline and shores.
- If your loss pertains to your business, make sure you have up to date documentation on your business and how you use the assets at risk. For example, if your beachfront home is a rental, be prepared to prove that you use it as such. If your boat is used for commercial fishing, you must be able to demonstrate that it is your business.
- For loss of income or profit, be prepared to document amount of time the business is not operational and relevant financial records including relevant profit and loss statements and tax returns.

- BP has established an Online Claim Form as well as a Claims Line for oil spill-related claims in counties that have been declared disaster areas. The toll-free number for the claims line is 1-800-440-0858. The line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Additional details on filing claims for damage and other information on the oil spill response can be found on Kosmas's website at www.kosmas.house.gov/oilspill.

More information on legislation Kosmas has sponsored to raise the liability cap on economic damages can be found [here](#).

Florida residents and visitors are encouraged to report evidence of oil along the state's shores by calling the State Warning Point at 1-877-2-SAVE-FL (1-877-272-8335), or by dialing #DEP from a cell phone. More information can be found at <http://www.floridadisaster.org>.

Those interested in volunteering with the oil spill response should visit www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org for more information.

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